



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Wisconsin*

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NEWS SUMMARY:

On March 15, 2006, in federal court in Green Bay, Wisconsin, Dewey A. Thunder, Sr. (DOB: 01/01/1965) entered a guilty plea to each count of a two-count indictment which alleged that Thunder, an employee at the Menominee Casino, Bingo, Hotel, a gaming establishment, operated by the Menominee Tribe, stole money on two occasions while emptying a slot machine. Specifically, the indictment alleges that during the week of September 13, 2004, Dewey A. Thunder, Sr., while an employee of the casino, took money, which belonged to the casino, from a slot machine and did the same on September 23, 2004, at which time he was arrested.

Each count is a felony and carries a maximum term of imprisonment of five years and a fine of \$250,00.00, followed by a term of supervised release of three (3) years in addition to a \$100 mandatory special assessment.

In pleading guilty, Mr. Thunder admitted the following facts: On September 23, 2004, Dewey A. Thunder Sr., an employee of the Menominee Casino, Bingo, Hotel, on the Menominee Indian Reservation, was arrested at the Casino for theft. Thunder was found to have \$466.00 in US Currency hidden under his shirt. Because Thunder's job involved removing the money from various gambling devices he was not allowed to have money on his person. He was part of what is referred to as the "Drop Team." Surveillance had captured Thunder, on video, taking cash out of the money box from the slot machine and putting the money into his shirt sleeve.

Thunder had been employed as a "hard count" cashier at the Menominee Casino, Bingo, Hotel since April 22, 2003. Thunder was responsible for collecting currency (soft count) and coin (hard count) from the casino gaming machines. At the beginning of each shift, Thunder participated in the "set up" which consisted of placing a cash box and a coin bucket by each machine. The set up took approximately one hour. After the set up was completed, the cashiers met and obtained the keys to the machines. Security and surveillance would be notified that the collection process was starting.

The cashiers and the security personnel worked as a team. A security guard observed as two cashiers worked an aisle. Each cashier worked one side of the

aisle. The cashier used a key to open the machine. The same key opened each machine as well as the cash box. The cashier would remove the cash box and set it on the floor and an empty cash box would be inserted into the machine. The cashier would then go on to the next machine. After all the machines in a particular section were emptied, the cash boxes would be collected and placed in a secure cage.

The process used for collecting currency from the older machines involved an “insert” and cover instead of the self contained cash box found on the newer machines. The cover was placed on the insert before it was removed, preventing access to the currency. There were times when the cover did not fit perfectly on the insert. If that happened, the cashier would notify security by calling “out by hand.” The security guard would watch as the insert was removed from the machine. The cashier would force the cover onto the insert. After the cover was on, the cashier would call “secured.” Security would also call out “secured” after verifying that the cover fit properly.

In his *Mirandized* statement, Thunder said he took currency from a gaming machine without authorization on two occasions. Thunder took \$466 on the morning of his arrest as well as \$432 the previous week. Both times, Thunder took the money from the same machine. Thunder explained that in this slot machine, the cash box would stick, so it had to be pulled out of the machine without its cover. When the cash box was out of the machine, the cover was placed on it. Just before the cover was placed on the box, Thunder was able to take the money. Thunder said the “cash is staring you in the face.” This machine was an older model that used the insert plus cover system. Thunder knew that the insert would be removed, the “out by hand” procedure. Thunder said he would move close to the machine to block the security guards’ vision. He then removed the currency from the insert before putting on the cover. Thunder put the money down his t-shirt sleeve. The money stayed in place because Thunder tucked his t-shirt into his underwear. Thunder said no one assisted him and no one knew that he took the money from the casino.

The Menominee Casino, Bingo, Hotel is licensed for Class II gaming by the Menominee Tribal Gaming Commission which operates pursuant to an ordinance and resolution approved by the National Indian Gaming Commission. The casino is located in the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

Thunder will be sentenced by Judge William Griesebach on June 12, 2006 at 1:30 p.m. in federal court in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

This case was the result of a joint investigation by Menominee Casino Bingo Hall Investigator Allen Ninham, Menominee Tribal Police Investigator Scott Wouters and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Agent Pat Lynch from the Green Bay office. The prosecution of this case has been assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Penny Coblentz from the Milwaukee office of the United States Attorney's office.

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For more information contact:

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